

LIBERAL— (with a small 'I')

"WE'RE to the left of the Liberal Party," said the president of the Australian Universities Liberal Federation, Alan Oxley.

"AULF is pretty discontented with the Liberal Party's liberalism. Indeed, many of our members would call its policies conservatism rather than liberalism," he said.

"AULF has no formal links with the Liberal Party. Our opinions are those of university liberals, not university Liberal Party members."

Alan, 21, is a fourth year Arts honors student at Monash University.

"We believe," he said, "that Australian society would be much better if the Liberal Party subscribed to liberalism as we see it — emphasising civil liberties and the quality of society, instead of the present emphasis on outright affluence."

Alan said that AULF's policies were more conservative at the 1966 annual conference and there had been a gradual "liberalising" at succeeding conferences.

"The policies could be even more radical at the 1970 annual conference," he said.

"In 1967 we were pro-conscription. In 1968 an anti-anti-conscription motion was by one vote. This year an anti-conscription motion was carried unanimously."

Alan is not sure why AULF has developed into a small "I" Liberal group.

"It is probably a reflection of students becoming more concerned with the problems of Australian society, such as poverty and civil liberties," he said.

He said it was also prob-

ably a reaction to militant campus groups. However, he stressed the reaction was positive and not negative.

"We don't oppose militant ideas because they're the ideas of militants, but generally their method of achieving their ideas," he said.

"The best policy is to examine the issues and put a constructive alternative to the students through student institutions."

Alan believes that the militants have "highlighted issues" which have made university liberals and all other students think.

However, he said: "The extreme left poses dangers on the campus.

They often display an intolerant attitude. And many of them believe it desirable to have the universities shut down to attain their political ends.

University liberals believe that the student institutions should be used to effect change, but we do not subscribe to the political ends of the extreme left."

What does the Liberal Party think about AULF? "The party doesn't mind if we're a bit radical. Relations with the party are very good. They recognise the value of university liberals on campus."

Alan said he didn't believe there was one philosophical principle behind the liberalism of AULF.

"At the moment, its liberalism is predominantly non-conservative. However, there are a few Tories and some strong anti-conservatives.

"Anyone can be a member of AULF as long as they call themselves liberal — conservative or not."

He admitted there was a danger that AULF's small "I" liberals would become discouraged with the Liberal Party.

"The Liberal Party is threatened by a strengthen-

ing of its Right wing. The Right wing members of parliament are a danger to liberalism. Fortunately, they do not determine government policy."

However, he is hopeful that sufficient small "I" liberals will join the Liberal Party so that change can be effected.

"AULF is not always critical of the government," he said.

"For example, most members would probably be pleased at the Prime Minister's realistic approach to Russians in the Indian Ocean.

"We are also pleased to see recent moves by Mr Gorton to control foreign investment in Australia."

Alan said there were some areas of policy in which AULF would like the Liberal Party to consider "the other side of the coin." These included:

- Abolishing all book, film and theatre censorship.

- Admitting Communist China to the UN as a permanent security seat member with Taiwan sitting as an ordinary member.

- Recognising that the National Liberation Front has a role to play in a "workable neutral regime" of South Vietnam.

- Opposing total foreign ownership of capital investment in Australia.

ALAN OXLEY, 21,
president of the Australian
Universities Liberal
Federation.

STUDENT
VOICE

YOUNG SUN



BY DAVID GRIFFITHS